ENGLISH

Written examination sample paper

The scenario in Section C has been prepared for the sole purpose of providing sample material for the VATE English written examination sample paper. Names of individuals and the characters are fictional, with no comparison with, or comment on, any living individual intended. The views expressed in the scenario are not necessarily those of the writer or publisher.

Total writing time: 3 hours

TASK BOOK

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Materials
Task book of 12 pages, including Examination assessment criteria on page 12.
You may use an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary.

Instructions
Complete each of the following:
— Section A: Text response
— Section B: Writing in Context
— Section C: Analysis of language use

All written responses must be in English.
If you write on a film text in Section A, you must not write on a film in Section B.

Disclaimer: Examination instructions and the Examination assessment criteria are taken from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) 2012 English written examination. The VCAA does not endorse the content of this exam.

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Section A — Text response

Instructions for Section A

Section A requires students to complete one analytical/expository piece of writing in response to one topic (either i. or ii.) on one selected text.

Indicate at the top of your answer page whether you are answering i. or ii.

In your response you must develop a sustained discussion of one selected text from the Text list below.

Your response must be supported by close reference to and analysis of the selected text.

For collections of poetry or short stories, you may choose to write on several poems or short stories, or on one or two in very close detail, depending on what you think is appropriate.

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

Section A is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

If you write on a film text in Section A, you must not write on a film text in Section B.

Text list

1. A Christmas Carol ................................................................. Charles Dickens
2. Brooklyn ........................................................................... Colm Tóibín
4. Cat’s Eye ........................................................................ Margaret Atwood
5. Cosi ................................................................................ Louis Nowra
7. Henry IV, Part I ................................................................. William Shakespeare
8. In the Country of Men ........................................................ Hisham Matar
9. Interpreter of Maladies ..................................................... Jhumpa Lahiri
10. On the Waterfront ............................................................. Directed by Elia Kazan
11. Ransom ........................................................................... David Malouf
12. Selected Poems ............................................................... Gwen Harwood
13. Stasiland ........................................................................ Anna Funder
14. The Old Man Who Read Love Stories .............................. Directed by Rolf de Heer
15. The Reluctant Fundamentalist .......................................... Mohsin Hamid
16. The War Poems ............................................................... Wilfred Owen
17. Things We Didn’t See Coming .......................................... Steven Amsterdam
18. Twelve Angry Men ........................................................... Reginald Rose
19. Will You Please Be Quiet, Please? ................................. Raymond Carver
20. Wuthering Heights .......................................................... Emily Brontë
21. Year of Wonders ............................................................. Geraldine Brooks
1. **A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens**
   i. “Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life.” How does the reader respond to this change in Scrooge?
   
   OR
   
   ii. ‘In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens suggests that if Scrooge can change, society can change too.’ Do you agree?

2. **Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín**
   i. ‘The reader is shown that one may need to abandon one’s own country to discover who one truly is.’ Discuss.
   
   OR
   
   ii. ‘Eilis’ decision to return to Brooklyn is more influenced by a need for freedom than for love.’ Do you agree?

3. **Bypass: the story of a road by Michael McGirr**
   i. ‘On the Hume, McGirr discovers the essential elements of the settlement of Australia.’ Discuss.
   
   OR
   
   ii. ‘The Hume is living history.’ How does McGirr demonstrate this?

4. **Cat’s Eye by Margaret Atwood**
   i. “Another belief of mine: that everyone else my age is an adult, whereas I am merely in disguise.” Does Elaine ever truly find herself?
   
   OR
   
   ii. “Forgiving men is so much easier than forgiving women.” Why are Elaine’s relationships with women so complicated?

5. **Cosi by Louis Nowra**
   i. How relevant is the actual performance of *Cosi Fan Tutte* to those involved?
   
   OR
   
   ii. ‘Cosi challenges the audience’s sense of what constitutes normality.’ Discuss.

6. **Dear America — Letters Home from Vietnam edited by Bernard Edelman**
   i. ‘The variety of narrative perspectives heightens the horrors of the Vietnam war.’ Do you agree?
   
   OR
   
   ii. ‘War has a damaging effect on all involved.’ Does the text show this to be true?
7. **Henry IV, Part I by William Shakespeare**
   i. “Why, thou owest God a death.”
      To what extent do religion and morality influence the actions of the characters in *Henry IV, Part I*?
   
   OR
   
   ii. “[T]hou art only marked/For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven./ To punish my mistreadings.”
      To what extent is Henry responsible for the corruption in his kingdom?

8. **In the Country of Men by Hisham Matar**
   i. To what extent does the child narrator accurately reveal the injustices around him?
      
      OR

   ii. ‘In this society ruled by tyranny and fear, it is the women who suffer most.’
      Discuss.

9. **Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri**
   i. ‘Adapting to a new country and culture is challenging.’
      How is this shown in *Interpreter of Maladies*?
      
      OR

   ii. ‘The children in the stories play just as important a role as the adults.’
      Do you agree?

10. **On the Waterfront directed by Elia Kazan**
    i. “You’ve got a real friend here.”
      ‘The characters in *On the Waterfront* struggle to understand what true friendship really is.’
      Discuss.

    OR

    ii. “I’ve never met anyone like you. There’s not a spark of sentiment or romance or human kindness in your whole body.”
      What influence does Edie have on others?

11. **Ransom by David Malouf**
    i. “Death is in our nature...And for that reason, if for no other, we should have pity for one another’s losses.”
      Why does Achilles agree to return Hector’s body?

    OR

    ii. ‘Achilles’ grief and revenge go beyond what is morally acceptable.’
      Do you agree?
12. *Selected Poems* by Gwen Harwood
   i. ‘It is the silenced and ignored who gain a voice in Harwood’s poetry.’
      Do you agree?
      OR
   ii. ‘It is Harwood’s skilful use of language and imagery which so vividly evokes the natural world.’
      Discuss.

13. *Stasiland* by Anna Funder
   i. “I think about the feeling I’ve developed for the former German Democratic Republic...I can only describe it as a horror-romance.”
      ‘Despite what Funder uncovers, her tale is one of triumph.’
      Discuss.
      OR
   ii. ‘Anna Funder is more than a detached storyteller in *Stasiland*, she is deeply involved in the story itself.’
      Do you agree?

14. *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* directed by Rolf de Heer
   i. ‘It is only by abandoning the world he has known that Antonio can find the essential truths about the existence he is seeking.’
      Discuss.
      OR
   ii. In what ways is reading shown to be so important in *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*?

15. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid
   i. ‘The reader is obliged to challenge Changez’s account of his life because of the way he lectures his listener.’
      Discuss.
      OR
   ii. “I flew to New York uncomfortable in my own face.”
      To what extent is Changez ever able to feel content with who he is?

16. *The War Poems* by Wilfred Owen
   i. ‘Despite the horror of war, Owen captures moments of love, spirituality and camaraderie.’
      Do you agree?
      OR
   ii. ‘Owen said, “All a poet can do today is warn”.’
      How does Owen demonstrate this in his poetry?
17. *Things We Didn't See Coming* by Steven Amsterdam
   i. ‘The narrative voice in *Things We Didn’t See Coming* reflects our own anxieties about the future.’
      Discuss.

   OR

   ii. ‘In a bleak world where survival requires self-interest, the narrator is the only character with principles.’
      Do you agree?

18. *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose
   i. ‘It is the Foreman who should be most held to account for the near miscarriage of justice.’
      Do you agree?

   OR

   ii. “It’s very hard to keep personal prejudice out of a thing like this.”
      How true is this shown to be in this play?

19. *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* by Raymond Carver
   i. ‘Carver’s characters are doomed to stay as they are.’
      Do you agree?

   OR

   ii. ‘Hope and despair are held in an uneasy balance by “the working poor”.’
      To what extent does this describe the characters in Carver’s stories?

20. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë
   i. ‘The novel is not about cruel Heathcliff, but of cruel Catherine.’
      Discuss.

   OR

   ii. “It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff, now.”
      To what extent is the personal happiness of the characters restricted by the society in which they live?

21. *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks
   i. ‘While Mompellion’s intentions are good, he is ultimately responsible for most of the damage in *Year of Wonders*.’
      To what extent do you agree?

   OR

   ii. ‘Anna’s narrative restricts our ability to see the events of the “plague year” objectively.’
      Do you agree?
Section B — Writing in Context

Instructions for Section B

Section B requires students to complete an extended written response.

Indicate the Context and the main text drawn upon at the top of your answer page.

In your writing, you must draw on ideas suggested by one of the following four Contexts.

Your writing must draw directly from at least one selected text that you have studied for this Context and be based on the ideas in the prompt.

Your response may be an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing.

If you write on a selected film text in Section A, you must not write on a selected film text in Section B.

Section B is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

Context 1 — The imaginative landscape

One Night The Moon........................................................................................................... Directed by Rachel Perkins
Peripheral Light...................................................................................................................... John Kinsella
The View from Castle Rock ..................................................................................................... Alice Munro
Tirra Lirra by the River ........................................................................................................... Jessica Anderson

Prompt

‘The places we live in reveal what kind of people we are.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘the places we live in reveal what kind of people we are’.

OR

Context 2 — Whose reality?

Death of a Salesman .................................................................................................................. Arthur Miller
Spies ........................................................................................................................................... Michael Frayn
The Lot: In Words ..................................................................................................................... Michael Leunig
The Player ................................................................................................................................. Directed by Robert Altman

Prompt

‘Our view of the world depends on who we are and where we come from.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘our view of the world depends on who we are and where we come from’.

SECTION B — continued

TURN OVER
Context 3 — Encountering conflict

*Life of Galileo* .......................................................... Bertolt Brecht
*Paradise Road* .......................................................... Directed by Bruce Beresford
*The Quiet American* .................................................. Graham Greene
*The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif* .................................. Najaf Mazari and Robert Hillman

Prompt

‘The choices we make under pressure can show us what we truly value.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘the choices we make under pressure can show us what we truly value’.

OR

Context 4 — Exploring issues of identity and belonging

*Growing Up Asian in Australia* ..................................... Edited by Alice Pung
*Skin* ........................................................................... Directed by Anthony Fabian
*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* .................................. Ray Lawler
*The Member of the Wedding* ......................................... Carson McCullers

Prompt

‘The need to belong can completely change who we are.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘the need to belong can completely change who we are’.

END OF SECTION B
Section C — Analysis of language use

Instructions for Section C
Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.
Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.
Read all parts of City Living and then complete the task below.
Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.
Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

TASK
How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the points of view presented in ‘City Life – What’s the Plan for Melbourne?’, ‘The Word on the Street’ and the advertisement ‘See Community From A Different Aspect’.

Background information
A weekend lifestyle magazine published by a large daily newspaper has invited a number of local identities and professionals to contribute articles to a series called City Living. Well-known businessman, Rod Urban presented his perspective in the light of recent debate about city planning and its effects on the quality of living for Melbourne residents.
The readership has been invited to contribute their own comments and responses to the articles in a section called ‘The Word on the Street’. Alfred Sylvan submitted one such response.
City Living

City Life—What’s the Plan for Melbourne?

Rod Urban
Senior Director, Zenith Construction

In the face of the GFC, the resilience of our economy is a source of pride for Australians. The building industry is booming and we should feel proud that the city is growing—we are moving step by step towards being a great city of international renown.

But what exactly is it that we want to be known for? Melbourne is suffering from urban sprawl as new estates are popping up with apparent randomness all about its outer fringe. Arable land is being wasted by covering it with unnecessarily large houses. Builders are frantically cashing in on all sides of the city, east, west, north, south. Melbourne is suffering from middle-aged spread. And this is not a case of putting on a few pounds after Christmas festivities. This is ugly. Is this how we want the world to see us?

I confess I don’t like estates that sprawl on the edges of the city. They fancy things up with an artificial lake or extra sports grounds, but it would be much better to build more intensively within a defined city boundary. The water in those artificial lakes disappears every summer and you end up with a mosquito-infested bog. And I’m not about to be fooled by a name. I drove past one the other day called ‘Greenwich Green’. The only way you get ‘green’ out there is to drain the water table through constant watering, and I’m not sure that we need to find more ways to waste water!

But personal taste aside, the thing that gets me the most is the fact that the government now seems willing to fork out the cash to connect these estates to the inner city with miles and miles of new roads. And we don’t have much choice. We either have to build new rail lines or put up with a constant stream of fancy four-wheel drives choking up our freeways. And this when country towns are crying out for decent roads that could save the lives of young people who regularly perish in traffic accidents for the lack of an adequate surface! Personally, I believe the lives of these people and their mourning families are far more important than the selfish indulgence of a few pseudo city-dwellers. We should spend the money on public transport inside a tightly-planned city, and save money for good roads out in the regional areas.

Our city planners have got to start making a more sensible plan—and stick to it! The best thing for our city would be to build more high-class, high-rise buildings in the city’s centre. This would enable more people to enjoy the convenience of vibrant commercial areas and the café lifestyle that you have read about in previous articles in this series. Increasing the population in the inner city would free up the cash drained by new roads and enable us to put existing rail lines underground to improve the flow of traffic. It would leave good farming land free for growing our food, and make it more pleasant for people who live outside Melbourne to visit the city when they need to.

I often ask people to tell me what picture they get in their minds when I use the words ‘great city’. Ninety per cent of them see the New York skyline. Our city is on the cusp of greatness and it’s not going to happen by building more roads and new estates out near the wilderness. To me ‘City Living’ means living in the city and that means more great buildings and an inspiring, exciting place to live.
The Word on the Street

It is all very well for Rod Urban to suggest that this city needs fewer new estates and more ‘great’ skyscrapers, but we also need somewhere to live. Besides not wanting to live in Melbourne’s crime-filled centre, like many others I work hard to put bread on the table for my family every day and I do not have enough cash left over to buy a luxury apartment in the city.

And even if I had the choice to live in a high-rise building, I would not do it. What Mr Urban does not seem to understand is that Melbourne is one place with many faces: its richness and diversity is what we have come to value in this enlightened day and age. And the fact is that lots of people choose to live somewhere with a bit of space around them and their right to choose should not be planned out of existence.

Even though he might be excited about the idea of cramming people into buildings and having them live on top of each other, he might want to consider what happens when these people decide to have families. Should we then build high-rise high schools? Maybe these schools could run their sports program in the basement and the kids can learn to kick a footy with the latest whiz-bang simulator.

My family, with two healthy, active boys and friends and family who want to visit us, needs space to live. I can’t afford the bundles of cash it takes to buy that kind of space in the inner city. Even if I did, I don’t want to walk out of a house the size of a shoebox for a mouth full of grit and petrol fumes whenever I am gasping for a bit of space and fresh air.

Personally, I’d rather live in a community where barbecues and backyard cricket bring people together; a place where people say g’day to you instead of staring blindly into space as they walk past.

Alfred Sylvan, Greenwich Green

Issues in the news

R-E-S-P-E-C-T: What do you think?
Have your say.

CONTACT US
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Examination assessment criteria

The examination will address all the criteria. Student responses will be assessed against the following criteria.

Section A – Text response
• detailed knowledge and understanding of the selected text, demonstrated appropriately in response to the topic
• development in the writing of a coherent and effective discussion in response to the task
• controlled use of expressive and effective language appropriate to the task

Section B – Writing in Context
• understanding and effective exploration of the ideas, and/or arguments relevant to the prompt/stimulus material
• effective use of detail and ideas drawn from the selected text as appropriate to the task
• development in the writing of a coherent and effective structure in response to the task, showing an understanding of the relationship between purpose, form, language and audience
• controlled use of language appropriate to the purpose, form and audience

Section C – Analysis of language use
• understanding of the ideas and points of view presented
• analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view and to persuade readers
• controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task

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END OF TASK BOOK